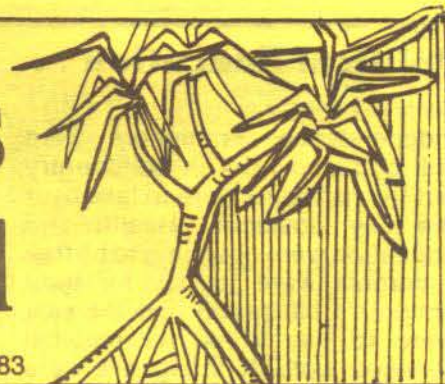


Pandanus Periodical



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WHAT IS POLITICAL EDUCATION?

by Ralph Wari

The writer examines the importance of public education in Papua New Guinea's drive to independence. Non-governmental organizations played a key role in readying their people to take over the reins of government from Australia.

How does one explain foreign political concepts to the people without confusing them? What do these concepts mean to the people in everyday life? Three aspects are important to consider when translating political philosophy into the real situation. They are past, present and future. These are relative notions of time. They provide the frame of reference for comparison. Any form of translation, however, must inevitably relate to the society's total situation to which it must apply.

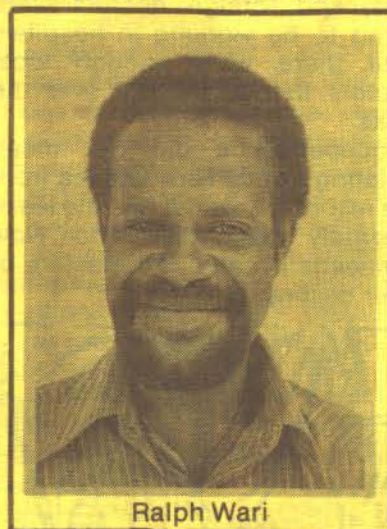
An Experience

The following paragraphs will focus on the experiences of one of the many countries in the Pacific that is independent. But it must be pointed out that it is not meant to be a model. The writer merely wishes to share ideas and experiences.

Since this article is specifically about political education it is proper to make some observations on how some aspects of it took place in PNG. The main player was the government. Private organizations such as churches and in particular student organizations of the University of PNG, (the ones the writer is most familiar with), the Students Representative Council provided some of the funds and the rest the students raised themselves. The funds were used to pay for transportation costs

where free transport was not available. Other than that the money was used to buy amenities and food while the students were traveling in the rural areas and while meeting with village folks. This took place during the long vacations.

The important message delivered to the village folk was the difference between being independent and being governed from outside. Independence meant being governed by Papua New Guineans and not controlled by Australians from Canberra. In



Ralph Wari

reality services provided by the Australian administration were **not** going to change very much after

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Mike Who?

This is the first issue of **PANDANUS PERIODICAL**, a newsletter designed to stimulate discussion on economic development, political and environmental alternatives available to the people of Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, the Mariana Islands and Guam.

PANDANUS PERIODICAL came about because of interest among people in Micronesia in learning more about what islands in the South Pacific are doing and the mountains of information on Pacific issues sitting in our office. As in Micronesia, South Pacific governments are grappling with economic and political dependence. Numerous South Pacific nations have gained their political independence during the last 15 years. With that independence has come the power to set economic and political policies that represent striking changes from the policies of their former colonial rulers—colonial policies which had maintained the islands' dependence.

PANDANUS PERIODICAL will provide news and generate discussion. As Micronesians attempt to self-determine their future political and economic status, consideration of alternatives to the Compact of Free Association is vital to a free and informed choice.

We welcome responses to the articles in this issue and suggestions for issues to focus on in the future.

Political Education . . .

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independence. Foreigners were still going to work in the country but the nationals were to take over the key positions; Health and education were not going to be free - parents were to pay for their children's education and the sick were to pay a fee for medical services; Lots of foreigners were still going to teach in the schools until there were sufficient national people to take over all the teaching jobs; and foreign doctors were going to be working in hospitals until there were enough local doctors trained to take over the tasks.

Independence did not mean isolating Papua New Guinea from the rest of the world. Not the least. It simply meant that Papua New Guineans became the masters of their destiny.



Importance of Non-Government Organizations

The involvement of non governmental organizations, and in particular student groups, in the writer's opinion proved to be useful in that the students were not just another group of government officials going around spreading government propaganda. They belonged to the people that they were talking to and they spoke the languages. They did not work against the wishes of the government. They were able to get to remote areas that government officials were not able to get to. Their work supplemented the government campaign. The fact that they were not government officials confirmed what the government officials were saying to the people.

The students' efforts and other private organizations' efforts provided comfort and confidence among the people. These groups were independent and provided a positive alternative to the government official's explanations and interpretations of what independence meant.

The goal

A general goal that should be aimed at is to avoid confusion and negative reacting that may ultimately result in social and/or political problems in a country. And specifically to realize the desired goals. The success or failure of the achievement of the goals would depend on the wisdom of the leadership and the dedication of those that are entrusted with the responsibility to execute the education program. Their effectiveness or ineffectiveness would depend on the quality of the information and the avenues through which they may choose to disseminate that information.

The understanding and interpretation of the political notions by the general populace depend on how well those that are responsible for delivering the message do it, as has been noted earlier.

The prime purpose is to assist the general public to come to grips with the Western political concepts that are foreign to them and to explain what they mean in everyday life. Simplicity is the key to achievement of the goal. This should therefore mean that interpretations or translations of the Western political ideas have to be translated into real life situations. Important also is that alternatives have to be provided.

Much happened during the pre-independence period of three years in Papua New Guinea. There were groups that propagated against independence while others were proponents of early independence. Those that campaigned against early independence contended that Papua New Guineans were not ready to manage their own affairs. These people did not believe there were sufficient Papua New Guineans trained with skills to run the country after independence.

There was another group that

believed that the country was going to fall after independence and there would be bloodshed. As a result of this, Chinese, Australians and other nationalities left the country. It is true to say that such negative propaganda created fear and mixed feelings among the people and so they were afraid of independence.

The fact remains that those who felt early independence was inevitable were successful in this pursuit. The question to ask then is this: Was it because of the quality of the public political education campaign? One can say "yes" with some confidence. However, it should also be noted that there was fear and mixed feelings among the people about independence; as has been noted earlier. It did, however, reveal one thing; and that is the majority were prepared to experience independence. They were prepared to let their own

What does independence mean to Papua New Guinea? It means political freedom which allows the leaders to determine and manage the affairs of the country.

people run the affairs of their country.

What does independence mean to PNG? As it does to all other sovereign nations, it means political freedom which allows the leaders to determine and manage the affairs of the country. There is a common saying that no country is independent because the world is a system of interdependent units. In fact all developing countries are not economically independent. This of course is common knowledge. PNG still depends on the outside aid for bulk of its funds for development programs.

But isn't independence the beginning of a process of growing up? Is not this process a combination of happiness, troubles, success, faith and hope for the future? A people must be ready to accept responsibility for

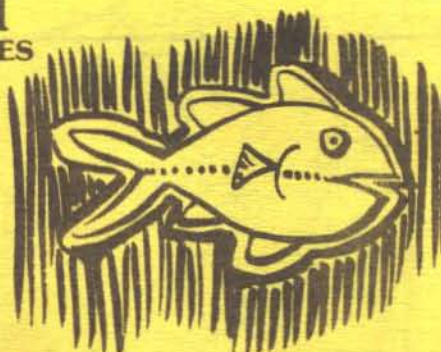
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TO FISH OR NOT TO FISH

ECONOMIC OPTIONS FOR INDEPENDENCE: MARINE RESOURCES

by Rod Winget

A crucial question that Micronesians are asking is whether or not they can generate cash revenues sufficient to seek full independent economic and political status. Current events centered around fishing experiments in Palau provide some interesting answers and economic options that could be competitive with the Compact of Free Association.



The Resource

It is widely assumed that Palauans, and Micronesians in general, have a wealth of marine resources within their jurisdictions and the question of primary importance is how to capitalize on this savings account.

In addition to tuna, which is the primary resource, there are also reef fish and bottom fish. Palauans are aware that their reef resources are very delicate and only sufficient for local consumption. Palauan fishing cooperatives are exporting bottom fish (chiefly snapper and grouper species), which come from outside of the fringing reefs. The cooperatives keep records on how many fish are caught, but these records are not correlated with sex or age composition, tagging programs or catch effort that would allow an assessment of the resource or development of a management plan.

In spite of scanty data on the real potential of tuna, existing records provide grounds for optimism. Landings in Koror from the local fleet of foreign boats totaled about 15,000 tons in 1981 from an average monthly fleet size of 15 vessels. . .

Although tuna abundance, like most other hunted living resources, varies considerably from year to year, the data suggest that 5-10,000 tons is a reasonable, average minimum catch to expect

These fish were caught in a very inefficient manner by searching open water for roaming tuna schools, which requires a lot of time and a lot of fuel. This can be changed. Tuna have one behavior that highly favor the entrepreneur; they are addicted to schooling around anything that floats.

A major technological advance in the last decade for small boat tuna fisheries has been the deploy-

ment of fish aggregation devices (FADs), which are buoys of 5-10 feet long anchored to the ocean floor. Hundreds have been used throughout the world and typically increase catch rates several fold in the vicinity of the FADs due to the tendency of tuna to school around them. They are placed close to land and greatly minimize travel and search expenses.

If the figures can be shown to be accurate, development oriented lending institutions would likely provide low interest loans to initiate Palau's fishing industry.

Projections

It is logical to assume that annual landings for a domestic fleet of small boats fishing around FADs could equal 10,000 tons. The price of whole, frozen tuna was about \$1000/ton on the world market in 1980-81, which would generate an annual revenue of \$10,000,000. Although the world tuna market is currently less than that, the record of the last 30 years indicates that peak prices have consistently returned within a few years and this article is based on the assumption that \$1000/ton is valid for planning purposes. Processing in Palau and aggressive marketing could net higher revenues.

It is also a good estimate that this catch would require about 50 boats of the size Palauans have been trained to use (35'), 75 FADs and a crew of 250 people at sea and another 50 in a processing plant. Total labor, operations, manage-

ment, shipping and other costs would probably equal about \$6,000,000. The boats, FADs, freezer and storage systems and processing equipment could be purchased for about \$8,000,000.

If one assumes an annual cash flow of \$4,000,000, the internal rate of return over a five year period on \$8,000,000 is approximately 40%, which is very good. If these figures can be shown to be accurate, development oriented lending institutions would likely provide low interest loans to initiate Palau's fishing industry.

Presumably, revenue from the fishing industry would be forever. If the projections above are even close to accurate, Palau has another option for obtaining a comparable cash injection to that of The Compact of Free Association.

Approach

Fisheries Development Associates in Seattle, Washington has designed a research project for Palauan waters to give support to these assumptions. Project design places sample FADs around Palau that minimize travel distance from the FAD sites to the fishing villages. A research vessel is designed to fish each FAD and gather catch and cash flow data to be used in a financial or business plan before expanding to a commercial scale.

A third benefit of the FAD project is to solve a classical dilemma faced by many emerging fishing nations. In order to justify investment in fishing facilities, Palau needs to generate export market commitments, but obtaining these commitments requires substantial evidence that an adequate supply of top quality fish is available. Catches from the FAD project

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Photo by Skip Polson

From the Editor

ARE THE COMPACT AND FISHING COMPATIBLE?

It is hoped that the results from the FAD fishing project (described in the accompanying article) will demonstrate an alternative economic option for Palau that is competitive with funding levels in the Compact of Free Association. Military activity, however, could pose a danger to the development of Palau's fishing industry based on FADS.

The FAD buoys, which will be located near villages, could be placed in such a way so as to allow safe passage of commercial ships. But the buoys could be a navigation hazard to military activity and the proposed war training allowed by the Compact. In Vieques, Puerto Rico, where the U.S. military conducts training exercises, fishermen have lost thousands of dollars of nets and fish traps because of naval war games. Additionally, because of the uncertain nature of U.S. military activity in Palau, these training exercises could disrupt the schooling behavior of the fish so that the effectiveness of the FAD buoys would be greatly reduced.

These arguments point out that Palau should have the option of considering its marine resource development prior to a plebiscite that might lock Palau into long term military activity.

To Fish...

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could entice buyers to a level sufficient to support initial investments.

Palau has a fisheries development program which it initiated in 1981 with "Operation Yellowfin" sponsored by the Palau Community Action Agency. This project trained approximately 95 Palauans in the use of a modern, diesel powered fishing vessel of a size (38') that is an appropriate transition from artisan technology. This year they are receiving 9 vessels of a similar size and type fully equipped with fishing gear from the Japanese that will employ a significant portion of these trainees. These vessels, plus a cash stipend and ice making machines for Palauan fishing villages are payment for fishing rights in Palau's waters. Fishing rights agreements represent another source of operating cash and capital for infrastructure development.

What has been described above is part of an integrated fisheries development plan which in turn supports an overall economic program. Other states in Micronesia also have fisheries development programs as well as other options for economic independence. In the case of fisheries, cooperation among islands will facilitate quality control, marketing and product transshipment, which

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their doings. Like a child that begins to accept responsibility at the time he is least ready. It learns to avoid fire after being hurt. Is it usually ready for this experience? Are not nations like the artist that endures for the final realization of his artistic excellence? Isn't the process of self-determination a means by which the colonized regain their dignity, pride and self confidence to once again determine their own political future?

In the next issue: **"SELF DETERMINATION IS AN INALIENABLE RIGHT OF A PEOPLE."**

—Ralph Wari, from Papua New Guinea, is currently completing an MA in Pacific Islands Studies at the University of Hawaii. He attended the University of PNG and the University of New England in Australia. He was an executive officer for the Third South Pacific Festival of Arts held in PNG in 1980.



will enhance economic growth and the possibility for full independence for all of Micronesia.

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